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DESCRIPTION OF A JOURNEY TO NORTH AMERICA

FOREWORD

BY RASMUS B. ANDERSON

I have been asked to prepare a brief introduction for Ole Nattestad's description of his journey from Norway to America in 1837. In complying with this request I shall make free use of facts and statements published by me in various other works and particularly in my *First Chapter of Norwegian Immigration* (1906).

The Norsemen have an honorable place in the annals of America. We may, indeed, say that the civilized history of this country begins with the Norsemen. If you look at a map you will at once find that Greenland and even a part of Iceland belong to the western hemisphere, and Iceland became the hinge upon which the door swings that opens America to Europe. It was the occupation of Iceland by the Norsemen in the year 874 and the frequent voyages between this island and Norway that led to the discovery and settlement first of Greenland and then of America, and it is due to the culture and fine historical taste of the Icelanders that carefully prepared records of these Norse voyages were kept, first to teach pelagic navigation to Columbus and afterwards to solve for us the mysteries concerning the first discovery of this continent.

The old republican Vikings well understood the importance of studying the art of ship-building and of navigation. They knew how to measure time by the stars and how to calculate the course of the sun and moon. They were themselves pioneers in venturing out upon the high seas and taught the rest of the world to navigate the ocean. Every scrap of written history sustains me when I say that the other peoples

of the world were limited in their nautical knowledge to coast navigation. The Norse Vikings who crossed the stormy North Sea, finding their way to Great Britain, to the Orkneys, the Faröes, and to Iceland, all those heroes who found their way to Greenland and Vinland, taught the world pelagic navigation. They demonstrated the possibility of venturing out of sight of land, and in this sense, if in no other, we may with perfect propriety assert that the Norsemen taught Columbus how to cross the Atlantic Ocean.

That the Norsemen held an honorable place in the annals of America is shown by a fact of the greatest importance in the world's history, namely, that the Norsemen anticipated by five centuries Christopher Columbus and Amerigo Vesputius and the the new world was discovered by Leif Erikson in the year 1000. About the year 860 the Norsemen discovered Iceland and soon afterwards (in 874) they established upon this island a republic which flourished for 400 years. Greenland was seen for the first time in 876 by Gunnbjorn Ulfson from Norway. About a century later, in the year 984, Erik the Red resolved to go in search of the lands in the west which Gunnbjorn as well as others later had seen. He sailed from Iceland, and found a land as he had expected, and remained there exploring the country for two years. At the end of this period he returned to Iceland, giving the newly-discovered country the name of Greenland in order, as he said, to attract settlers who would be favorably impressed with so pleasing a name. Thus, as Greenland belongs geographically wholly to America, it will be seen that Erik the Red was the first white man to boom American real estate. And he was successful. Many Norsemen emigrated, particularly from Iceland, and a flourishing colony with Gardar as its capital and Erik the Red as its first governor was established and became the first settlement of Europeans in the new world. In the year 1261 it became subject to the crown of Norway. We have a list of seventeen bishops who served

in Greenland. Erik the Red and his followers were not Christian when they settled in Greenland, but worshippers of Odin and Thor, though they relied chiefly on their own might and strength. Christianity was introduced among them about the year 1000, though Erik the Red continued to adhere to the religion of his fathers to his dying day.

The first white man whose eyes beheld any part of the American continent was the Norseman, Bjarne Herjulfson, who saw this land in the year 986. The first white man who, to our knowledge, planted his feet on the soil of the American continent was Leif Erikson, the son of Erik the Red, in the year 1000; and Leif's brother Thorvald, who died in 1002, was the first white man and the first Christian who was buried beneath American sod. Thorfin Karlsefne, who landed in 1007, was the first white man to found a settlement within the limits of the present United States, and his wife, Gudrid, was the first white woman who came to Vinland. In the year 1008 she gave birth to a son in Vinland. The boy, who received in baptism the name Snorre, was the first person of European descent born in the new world. In 1112 Erik Upsi settled as bishop in Greenland and in 1121 this same bishop went on a missionary journey from Greenland to Vinland, the first visit of a Christian minister to the American continent. The last of these interesting voyages before the re-discovery of America by Columbus was in the year 1347 when a Greenland ship with a crew of eighteen men came from Nova Scotia (Markland) to Straumfjord in Iceland. Thus it appears that the Vinland voyages extended over a period of about 350 years and to within 145 years of the rediscovery of America by Columbus in 1492. From the accounts of these voyages and settlements we get our first knowledge and descriptions of the aborigines of America.

While Leif Erikson was the first white man to plant his feet on the eastern shores of the American continent, it was left to another plucky Scandinavian to become the discoverer

of the narrow body of water which separates America from Asia. Vitus Bering was a Dane born in Jutland, in Denmark, in 1680. He entered the service of Russia and in 1725 was made commander-in-chief of one of the greatest geographical expeditions ever undertaken. He explored the Sea of Kamchatka and during this voyage in 1728 he discovered Bering Strait and ascertained that Asia was not joined to America, thus becoming the discoverer of the extreme western boundary line of the continent.

The first visit of Scandinavians to America proper in post-Columbian times occurred in the year 1619, just a year before the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth. In the spring of that year King Christian IV fitted out two ships, the *Eenhjørningen* and the *Lamprenen*, for the purpose of finding a northwest passage to Asia. The commander of this expedition was the Norwegian, Jens Munk, born at Barby in southern Norway in 1579. Sailing from Copenhagen with his two ships and sixty-six men May 9, 1619, he explored Hudson Bay and took possession of the surrounding country in the name of his sovereign and gave it the name of Nova Dania. All the members of this expedition perished except Jens Munk and two of his crew, who returned to Norway September 25, 1620, the undertaking having proved a complete failure. The ship chaplain on this expedition was a Danish Lutheran minister, Rasmus Jensen Aarhus, the first minister to preach Lutheranism in the new world. He died February 20, 1620, on the southwestern shore of Hudson Bay at the mouth of the Churchill River. His last sermon was a funeral sermon preached from his own death bed.

Norwegians and Danes came to New Amsterdam (New York) at a very early period. Traces of Scandinavians in New York can be found as early as 1617. In 1704 these Norwegians and Danes built a stone church on the corner of Broadway and Rector streets, where regular services were held in the Danish language until the property was sold to

Trinity Church, the present churchyard occupying the site of the early building. The first directory published in New York shows many names of unquestionable Norwegian or Danish origin.

It is well known that the Swedes founded a settlement on the Delaware in 1638, and the Swedish language was used in a Philadelphia church as late as 1823. John Morton, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and an active member of the Continental Congress, was a descendant of the Swedes of Delaware. Robert Anderson, the gallant defender of Fort Sumter, against which the first gun of the Civil War was fired, was also a scion of the Swedes on the Delaware, and so it appears that love of freedom and patriotism and statecraft and valor came to America not only in the *Mayflower* but also in the *Kalmarnyckel* and *Vogelgrip*, which brought the first Swedish settlers to America in 1638.

How many Norwegians landed in America between the years 1492 and 1821 it is impossible to determine. There are no government statistics to guide us and we know there was no regular or systematic emigration from any of the Scandinavian countries. It is certain that no Norwegians came in collective bodies to form settlements, and we can trace them only through their descendants who have kept family records or through public documents or published works where they happen to be mentioned. In this way some of the Scandinavians who settled in New Amsterdam have been found.

In a similar manner we find the names of Norwegians and Swedes who took part in the war of the Revolution. There is the case of Thomas Johnson. In Volume 28 (1874) of the *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* we find a full account of Thomas Johnson who served under Paul Jones, first in the crew of the *Ranger* and afterwards in the crew of the *Bonhomme Richard*. Johnson was the son of a

pilot at Mandal, a seaport on the southwest coast of Norway, where he was born in 1758. In the absence of his father, he towed the first American vessel, the *Ranger*, commanded by Paul Jones, into the harbor of Mandal. After their arrival Jones sent for the young pilot and, presenting him with a piece of gold, expressed his pleasure at his expert seamanship, which he had minutely watched during the towing of the ship into the harbor. Jones had made the port of Mandal for the purpose of recruiting the crew of the *Ranger*; and, satisfactory arrangements having been made with his father, Johnson was received on board as a seaman. Thomas Johnson died at the age of ninety-three at the United States Naval Asylum in Philadelphia on July 12, 1851; he had been there for many years a pensioner, and was known by the soubriquet "Paul Jones." The account of Thomas Johnson led me to investigate further into the history of John Paul Jones, and in his biography, written by John Henry Sherburne, register of the navy of the United States, published at Washington in 1825, I found a roll of officers, seamen, marines, and volunteers who served on board the *Bonhomme Richard* in her cruise made in 1779. In this roll the native country of every man is given and in it I found two seamen born in Norway and seven born in Sweden.

Here I may also mention the brilliant Swede, Colonel Axel Fersen, who, in 1779, went to France where he was appointed colonel of the Royal Regiment of Swedes. He served with distinction at the head of his regiment in the later campaigns of the American War, distinguishing himself on various occasions, particularly in 1781, during the siege of Yorktown, where he was aide-de-camp to General Rochambeau. He also took part in the negotiations between General Washington and General Rochambeau. He afterwards became Marshal of the kingdom of Sweden.

It is fair to presume that a considerable number of enterprising Scandinavians found their way to their old Vinland

during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and particularly during the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

In the early days of the American republic diplomatic and consular relations were established with the Scandinavian countries, and there was more or less commerce between Norway, Sweden, and Denmark and the United States. This financial and commercial intercourse would naturally induce some Scandinavians to visit the United States and others to settle within our gates. The many Scandinavian names found in the old directories of New York, Philadelphia, and other eastern cities are largely to be accounted for in this manner.

From the year 1820 the United States government supplies us with immigration statistics, but in these Sweden and Norway are grouped together down to the year 1868, and hence it is impossible to determine until then how many immigrants came from each country. From the year 1836 we are helped out by Norway, where the government then began to collect and prepare statistics of emigration.

The father of Norwegian emigration to the United States in the nineteenth century was Kleng Peerson from near Stavanger, Norway. In the year 1821 he with a comrade, Knud Olson Eide, was sent from Norway to New York by the Society of Quakers in and near Stavanger for the purpose of making an investigation of conditions and opportunities in the United States. After a sojourn of three years in America, all that time being spent in and around New York City, they returned to Norway. Here their reports of social, political, and religious conditions in America and their description of opportunities in the new world awakened great interest, inducing a resolution on the part of many to emigrate. Lars Larsen, the man at whose house the first Quaker meeting had been held in Stavanger in 1816, at once undertook to organize a party of emigrants. Being successful in finding the number of people who were ready and willing to join him, the heads of families furnished their scanty possessions

in money and purchased a sloop which had been built in the Hardanger Fjord between Stavanger and Bergen and which they loaded with a cargo of iron. For this sloop and cargo they paid the sum of \$1,800.

This little Norwegian *Mayflower* of the nineteenth century received the name *Restaurationen* (the "Restoration") and on the day of American Independence, July 4, 1825, the brave little company of emigrants sailed out of the harbor of the ancient and grotesque city of Stavanger. The company consisted of fifty-two persons, including the two officers, chiefly from Stavanger City and Tysver Parish, north of Stavanger. They were fifty-two when they left Stavanger, but when they reached New York on the second Sunday of October (October 9) they numbered fifty-three, the wife of the leader, Larsen, having given birth to a beautiful girl baby on the second of September.

From 1825 to 1836 there was but little emigration from Norway. Before 1836 there were no vessels carrying emigrants from Norway to America. Those who did emigrate came either by way of Gothenborg, Sweden, or Havre, in which cities passengers to America could be accommodated.

Gothenborg vessels carried Swedish iron to America but emigrants frequently had to wait for weeks before they found a ship bound for New York. From Hamburg regular packet ships carried German emigrants, but these were so numerous that there was frequently a delay of from two to three weeks before they could be accommodated. In Havre the emigrant packets were also regular but there were not so many emigrants and the Norwegians could count on going on the first ship leaving port. This made Havre the most popular point of departure from Europe for the Norwegians.

Of course, a great number of letters were written by the Norwegians in America to relatives and friends in Norway and these were read by hundreds who were anxious to better their fortunes. Finally, one of the sloop passengers, Knud

Anderson Slogvig, returned to Norway in 1835 and the news that he had arrived at his old home in the Skjold district spread far and wide and created the greatest excitement. He was the hero of the day. People traveled hundreds of miles to see and talk with him. Letters from emigrants had been read with the deepest interest but here was a man who had spent ten years in the new world! Through Knud Slogvig the American fever spread beyond the limits of Stavanger Amt and Christiansand Stift. This led to the great exodus of 1836, when the two Koehler brigs, *Norden* and *Den Norske Klippe*, were fitted out for emigrants in Stavanger and left that summer loaded with about two hundred passengers for New York. On board the *Norden* my father and mother and my two oldest brothers were passengers. The American fever continued, calling for two ships in 1837, the *Aegir* from Bergen and the *Enighedon* from Egershund. Then there was a partial lull, until after 1840, when the American fever set in for good. It has continued to rage ever since, culminating in the year 1882, when over 29,000 Norwegians landed in the United States.

Those who came in the sloop *Restaurationen* settled in Kendall, Orleans County, New York, on the shores of Lake Ontario. In 1833 we find Kleng Peerson in company with a Quaker, Ingebret Larsen Narvig, who had come from Norway to Boston in 1831 and footed it from there to Kendall, on their way to the far west. Larsen parted company with Kleng and went to work for a farmer in Michigan. Kleng continued his journey westward until he reached La Salle County, Illinois, and there selected the location of the second Norwegian settlement in this country. Kendall and Fox River settlement in Illinois was his undying glory. Most of the settlers in Orleans County, New York, on the advice of Kleng, moved to the Fox River settlement. In 1836 these were joined by the 200 immigrants who came in the *Norden*

and the *Den Norske Klippe*, and in 1837 by many of those who came in the *Aegir* and the *Enighedon*.

One of the Norwegians who came in the *Aegir* was Ole Rynning, a name well known in the annals of Norwegian immigration. On reaching Chicago he was persuaded by a couple of Americans to go with some of his friends to inspect lands some eighty miles south of Chicago along Beaver Creek with the view of founding a Norwegian settlement there. Ole Rynning chose as his companions on this journey of inspection Niels Veste from Etne in Norway, Ingebrigt Brudvig, and Ole Nattestad from Numedal, Norway, the latter the author of the book herewith published. Ole Nattestad and his brother, Ansten, had just arrived by way of Gothenborg, Sweden, and Fall River, Massachusetts, and joining a group of other immigrants in Detroit, Michigan, had accompanied them to Chicago. The rest of the company remained in Chicago to await the result. Ole Nattestad stated that he did not like the land, it being sandy and swampy, but as the others were pleased with it, it was agreed that Nattestad and Veste should remain and put up a log house for the reception of the immigrants while Rynning and Brudvig returned to Chicago to fetch their friends.

Some of those who were left in Chicago in the meantime had gone to the Fox River settlement but the most of them went with Rynning and Brudvig to Beaver Creek. There were no settlers in the immediate vicinity and it was difficult to procure the common necessities of life, although the most of these people were well supplied with money. Many of the new settlers grumbled and were inclined to find fault with Ole Rynning and the others who were responsible for the selection of this settlement. All chose land for farms, and before winter set in a sufficient number of log houses had been built. The number of settlers here was about fifty. These people were well and happy in America during the first winter, but the next spring the whole settlement was flooded

and the swamp was turned into a veritable lake. In the summer the settlers were attacked by malarial fever. In a short time no less than fourteen or fifteen deaths occurred and among those who here found his last resting place was Ole Rynning. The survivors fled, leaving farms and houses, as there was nobody to buy land where a malarial atmosphere threatened the inhabitants with almost certain destruction. The most of those who fled found their way to the Fox River settlement, reaching there late in the summer of 1838. Only a few remained two or three years, defying the dangers to health and life, the last one to leave the colony being Mons Aadland, a brother of the well-known journalist and author, Knud Langland. He finally exchanged his farm for a small number of cows at auction and went to Racine County, Wisconsin, where he lived to a ripe old age.

Ole Rynning became particularly conspicuous and influential on account of a book which he published in Christiania, Norway, in 1838, the title of which is "Sandfaerdig Beretning om Amerika til Oplysning og Nytte for Bonde og Menigmand forfattet af en norsk, som kom derover i Juni Maaned 1837," that is, "A Truthful Account of America for the Instruction and Help of the Peasant and Commoner Written by a Norwegian Who Came there in the Month of June, 1837." The author's name is given at the end of the preface where we read: "Illinois, February 13, 1838, Ole Rynning."

This little book of only thirty-nine pages is now exceedingly scarce. I obtained a copy of it from Rev. B. J. Muus of Goodhue County, Minnesota. In the nineties I reprinted it in *Amerika* and struck off about two hundred copies which I had bound and placed in various libraries. A copy of it may be found in the library of the Wisconsin State Historical Society.

We began with Erik the Red and Leif Erikson and have now come to the brothers, Ole and Ansten Nattestad. Ole K.

Nattestad was born December 24, 1807; died May 28, 1886. His wife died September 15, 1888. Ansten K. Nattestad was born August 26, 1813; died April 8, 1889.

The fourth Norwegian settlement in America and the first in Wisconsin was founded by Ole Knudsen Nattestad (changed in America to Natesta) who was accordingly the first Norwegian to set foot on Wisconsin soil. He came to Clinton, Rock County, Wisconsin, July 1, 1838, and this was the beginning of the so-called Jefferson Prairie settlement, which occupies the southeast corner of Rock County and extends into Boone County, Illinois. They came from Vegli, Rolloug Parish in Numedal, Norway, by way of Gothenborg and Fall River, Massachusetts.

When the Beaver Creek settlement was abandoned, Ansten Nattestad, in the spring of 1838, returned to Norway, taking with him the Ole Rynning manuscript and also the manuscript of a journal kept by his brother, Ole Nattestad. Ansten stated that this manuscript of his brother was published in Drammen, Norway, that same year but in spite of the most diligent search I have never been able to secure a copy of that edition. In Norway copies of all publications are placed in the University Library. I had this library searched for a copy of Nattestad's book but none could be found. In an interview published in *Billed Magazin* in Madison, Wisconsin, in 1869, Ansten Nattestad made the following statement:

In the spring of 1838 I went from Beaver Creek, Illinois, by way of New Orleans to Liverpool in England and thence to Norway to visit friends and acquaintances in my native land. I brought with me letters from nearly all the earlier Norwegian emigrants whom I had met and in this way information was scattered far and wide in Norway. My brother's journal was published in Drammen and Ole Rynning's work on matters of the new world appeared at the same time in Christiania. Of Rynning's book I brought the manuscript with me from America. The Rev. Mr. Kragh in Eidsvold read the proofs and left out the chapter about the Norwegian clergymen who therein were accused of intolerance in religious matters and inactivity in questions concerning the betterment of the people in temporal affairs and in questions concerning the advancement of education.

In 1869 Ole Nattestad gave the following account of himself in the *Billed Magazin* referred to above:

As the next oldest of three brothers, I did not have the right of primogeniture to my father's farm which, according to law, and custom, would go to the oldest son. My ambition was to become a farmer, and I hoped some day to be able to buy a farm in my own neighborhood. Then my brother entered the military school in Christiania and I was to manage the farm during his absence. I entered upon my task cheerfully, worked with all my might and kept a careful account of income and disbursements. To my great surprise, I soon found that in spite of all my toil and prudence, I did not make much headway. When the year was ended, I had little or nothing left as a reward for my labor and it was clear to me that it would not do to buy an expensive farm and run in debt for it. Farming did not pay in the locality where I was born. I then tried the occupation of an itinerant merchant. I could earn a living in this way, but the laws were against me and I did not like to carry on a business of such a nature that it was necessary to keep my affairs secret from the *lensmand* [undersheriff]. Then I worked awhile as a blacksmith. This furnished me enough to do, but it was difficult to collect the money I earned. The law did not permit me to work at my trade in the city. Then [in 1836] my younger brother, Ansten, and I went across the mountains to the western part of Norway to buy sheep which we intended to sell again. While we were stopping in the vicinity of Stavanger, we heard much talk about a country which was called America. This was the first time we heard this word. We saw letters written by Norwegians who were living in America and we were told that Knud Slogvig, who, many years before that had emigrated in a sloop [*Restaurationen*] from Stavanger, had lately visited his native land and had given so favorable a report about America that about 150 [should be 200] emigrants from Stavanger Amt and from Hardanger had gone back with him and had sailed that very summer [1836] in two brigs from Stavanger across the ocean. They had gone in spite of all sorts of threats and warnings about slavery, death, and disease. This was the first large exodus after the emigration of the sloop party in 1825. All that we here saw was so new and came to us so unexpectedly that we were not at once able to arrange all the reports into a systematic whole and thus get a correct idea of conditions in the new world. But when I spent the following Christmas with Even Nubbru who was a member of the Storting from Sigdal we discussed the hard times in my native valley and I suggested that I might have better luck in some other part of the country. In replying Even Nubbru remarked that wherever I went in the world, I would nowhere find a people who had as good laws as the Americans. He had accidentally just had the opportunity of reading something about America in a German newspaper and he described the free institutions of America. This information had a magic effect on me as I looked upon it as an injustice that the laws of Norway should forbid me to trade and not allow me to get my living by honest work as a mechanic wherever I desired to locate. I had confidence in the judgment of the member of the Storting and I

compared his remarks with what I had heard about America in the vicinity of Stavanger. Gradually I got to thinking of emigration and while considering the matter on my way home, the idea matured into a resolution. My brother Ansten did not have to be asked a second time. He was willing at once; he approved of my plans and in April, 1837, we were ready for our journey. When we left home, we had together about eight hundred dollars, Norwegian money, but this sum gradually grew less on account of our expenses on the way and besides we lost considerable in changing our money into American coin. Ansten also paid the passage for Halsten Halvorsen Braekke-Eiet who now [1869] resides in Dodgeville [Wisconsin], and is looked upon as an excellent blacksmith.

Our equipment consisted of the clothes we wore, a pair of skis, and a knapsack. People looked at us with wonder and intimated that we must have lost our senses. They suggested that we had better hang ourselves in the first tree in order to avoid a worse fate. We went on skis across the mountains from Rolloug to Tin and thence in a direct line over hills and through forests to Stavanger, where we expected to get passage across the sea. We did not worry about the roads for all three of us were experts on skis and our baggage caused us no inconvenience. In Stavanger we told everybody that we were going to America and wanted to secure passage across the sea. This open-heartedness came near spoiling our plans. The report of three mountaineers soon spread over the whole city and high government officials came to see our passports. We were now told that the bailiff's passport only permitted us to go to Stavanger while the certificate from the pastor correctly stated that we intended to leave the country and emigrate to America. We were not versed in such things and thought our papers were in order, especially as the documents we carried gave testimony that we were men of good habits and Christian conduct. No suspicious remarks were made but in the evening there came a man who was angry on account of the wrong the officials were going to do us and related that it had been resolved that we were to be arrested the following day and then to be sent from *lensmand* to *lensmand* to our native valley as we intended to leave the country without permission being given in the passport from the bailiff. The government here, he said, was in a bitter rage against all emigrants and we could not count on any mercy. On this man's advice we departed secretly from Stavanger under cover of night in order to avoid the danger that threatened us and without attracting any attention we got to Tananger. Here we met a skipper who, with his yacht loaded with herring, was ready to sail to Gothenborg. He promised to take us on board, but when we told him what had happened to us in Stavanger, he became doubtful. He praised our honesty, and on further assurance that we would assume all responsibility if we got in trouble, he decided to accept us as passengers. We acted discreetly while we were ashore and we felt greatly relieved when we finally got to sea. In Gothenborg we had no mishaps, and we secured passage in a vessel loaded with Swedish iron and bound for Fall River, Massachusetts. The journey lasted thirty-two days and we paid fifty dollars each for transportation and board. From Fall River we went to New York where we met a few Norwegians who helped us to get to

Rochester. Here we talked with some of our countrymen who, twelve years ago, had come in the sloop from Stavanger that brought the first Norwegian immigrants to America. Rochester and vicinity did not meet our expectations in regard to the new world. Many of the first immigrants had left the first settlement in Kendall and had gone west to find new lands, particularly to La Salle County, Illinois, near Ottawa on the Fox River. The Fox River colony received a very considerable increment by the great exodus from Stavanger in 1836, that is, the year before I came to America. The most of these immigrants had located in that settlement. This we learned in Rochester, and there we heard for the first time the name Chicago. We determined to go west and see what we could find. When we had reached Detroit, I was walking in the streets to look at the town. There I accidentally met a man by whose clothes I could see that he was from the western coast of Norway. I greeted the man and he returned my greeting, and the meeting was like that of two brothers who had not seen each other for years. He informed me that he had left Bergen some months before, together with about seventy [should be eighty-four] passengers and that the whole company of which the University secretary, Ole Rynning, was the leader, had been waiting a week for transportation to Chicago. We were glad to meet our countrymen and we joined the party, in which there was at least one [Rynning] who could speak English. On landing in Chicago we met Bjorn Anderson Kvelve [the father of the present editor] from the Stavanger company. He had come to America the year before [1836] and had travelled through various parts of Illinois but all that he had heard and seen had only served to make him dissatisfied with this side of the ocean. Broken down in soul and body, he stood before us as a victim of misery and produced a scene so terrible that it never will be blotted from my memory. "God bless and comfort you!" said he. "There is neither work nor land nor food to be had and by all means do not go to Fox River; there you will all die from malarial fever." These words had a terrible effect on our little flock, many of whom had already lost all courage. Like demons from the lower world, all the evil warnings about the terrors that awaited the emigrants to America were now called to mind and even the bravest were as by magic stricken by a panic which bordered on insanity. The women wrung their hands in despair and uttered terrible shrieks of woe. Some of the men stood immovable like statues with all the marks of frightful despair on their faces, while others made threats against those whom they regarded as the promoters of emigration and the leaders of the party. But in this critical situation Ole Rynning's greatness appeared. He stood in the midst of the people who were ready for mutiny; he comforted those in despair and gave advice to those who doubted and hesitated and reproved those who were obstinate. He was not in doubt for a moment and his equanimity, courage, and noble self-sacrifice for the weal of others had acquired him influence in the minds of all. The storm abated and the dissatisfaction gave place to a unanimous confidence. A couple of Americans with whom Rynning talked advised him to take the immigrants to Beaver Creek, directly south of Chicago in Iroquois County.

It seems to me that the story told about my father must, to say the least, be overdrawn. The facts as I have them from my mother, from Mons Aadland, and even from Ole Nattestad himself, do not warrant the painting of so weird a picture. All the prose there is in the romance is that my father met these people in Chicago and was unwilling to recommend the Fox River settlement with which he was not pleased, and as he had never seen Iroquois County, he had no share in recommending the immigrants to go to Beaver Creek. His dissatisfaction with the Fox River settlement is further confirmed by the fact that in 1840 he found a new home in Albion, Dane County, Wisconsin. In support of my view, I may here quote the words of Prof. Svein Nilsson in *Billed Magasin* (1869) where, in alluding to the Beaver Creek settlement he states:

Ole Rynning's company met Bjorn Anderson Kvelve in Chicago. The unfavorable description he gave of the land both west and north frightened the immigrants from locating in any of the existing Norwegian colonies and this resulted in the founding of the Beaver Creek Settlement whose sad story is well known to the Scandinavian population in the northwest. In this connection bitter reproaches have been directed against Bjorn Anderson Kvelve as being in a great measure to blame for the fatalities of Beaver Creek. But it is usually the case that people like to seek in others the cause of their misfortune. This is true of the individual as well as of corporations and societies and perhaps a little more so in the case of the immigrants visited by adversity. At all events, it is our opinion that we do a justice to the man when we say that the criticism of Bjorn Anderson Kvelve has been too severe, if not utterly unfounded.

Ole Nattestad continues:

In the spring of 1838 my brother, Ansten, went to Norway and I worked by the day in the northern part of Illinois.

The first of July, 1838, I came to my present home in about the middle of the town of Clinton, Rock County, Wisconsin, where I bought land and I am consequently the first Norwegian to settle in this state. So far as known, no other Norwegian had planted his feet on Wisconsin soil before me. For a whole year I saw no countryman but lived alone without friend, family, or companion. Eight Americans had settled in the town before me but they lived about as isolated as I did. I found the soil very fertile and the monotony of the prairie was relieved by small bunches of trees. Deer and other game were abundant. The horrid howl of the prairie wolf disturbed my sleep until habit armed

my ears against annoyances of this sort. The following summer [1839] I built a little log hut and in this residence I received in September a number of people from my own parish in Norway. They had come as immigrants with my brother, Ansten. The most of these settled on Jefferson Prairie and in this way the settlement got a large population in a comparatively short time.

In 1840 Ole Nattestad married Lena Hiser who died September 15, 1888. She left seven children, all well educated and in good circumstances. Henry, the youngest son, now occupies the old homestead.

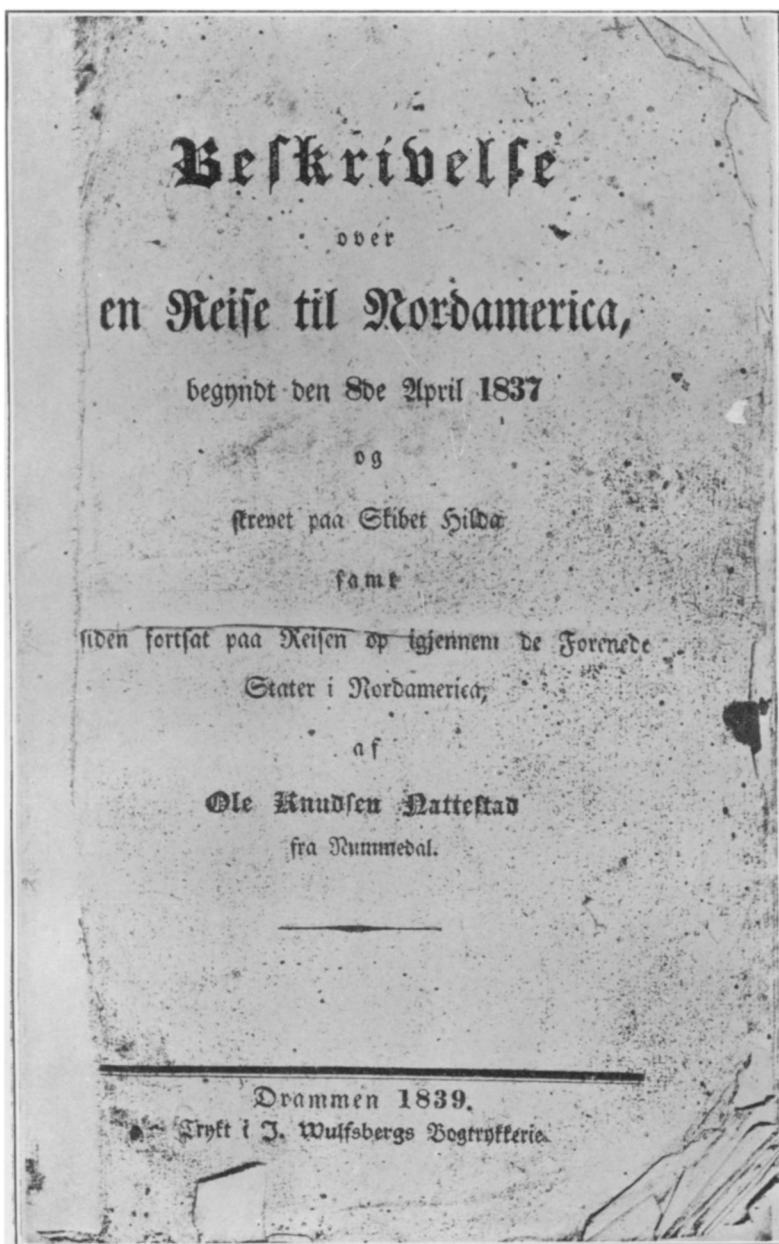
We now pass to Ansten Nattestad, the brother of Ole, and will let him tell the story as published in the *Billed Magazin*:

In the spring of 1838 I went by way of New Orleans to Liverpool and thence to Norway to visit friends and acquaintances in my native land. . . . [What he tells about Rynning's and his brother Ole's manuscripts has already been stated.] I spent the winter in Numedal. The report of my return spread like wildfire through the land and an incredible number of people came to see me and to get news from America. Many came as far as twenty Norwegian [140 English] miles to have a talk with me. It was impossible to answer all the letters I received asking questions about the condition of things on the other side of the ocean. In the spring of 1839 about 100 persons from Numedal stood ready to go with me across the sea. Among these were many farmers and heads of families, all, excepting the children, able-bodied persons in their best years. Besides these there were a number from Thelemarken and from Numedal who were unable to join me as our ship was full. We went from Drammen direct to New York. It was the first time the inhabitants of Drammen saw an emigrant ship. [The name of the ship was *Emelia* and the Captain's name was Ankerson]. Each person paid \$33.50 for his passage. We were nine weeks on the sea; the passage was a successful one and there was no death on board. From New York we took the common route up the country. In Milwaukee we met those from Tin and Thelemarken and the others who were unable to come in our ship across the sea. [They had come by way of Gothenborg, Sweden, to Boston.] They came on board to us and wanted us to go with them to Muskego, Wisconsin. Men had been out there to inspect the country and they reported that the grass was so high that it reached up to their shoulders and told of many other glorious things. The Americans, too, used every argument to persuade us to stop in Milwaukee. I objected and we continued our journey. In Chicago I learned that my brother, Ole, had settled in Wisconsin during my absence in Norway. Some of the party went to the Fox River settlement where they had acquaintances, while some unmarried persons found employment in Chicago and vicinity. The rest of them, that is to say, the majority, accompanied me to Jefferson Prairie. Among these were a few who settled in the town of Rock Run, Stevenson

County, in the northern part of Illinois about fifty miles southwest from Jefferson Prairie, and there they formed the nucleus of the Norwegian settlement. Others of my company went to Rock Prairie, a few miles west of Jefferson Prairie. I and the rest came at once to Jefferson Prairie where we bought land and began to cultivate it.

In 1840 a few came here from Numedal and from that time the number of settlers steadily increased, chiefly by new arrivals from Norway. The most of those from Numedal settled in the northern part of the colony, for we who came after my brother, who was here before any of us, bought land in the place where he had built his cabin and those from the same part of Norway who came later as immigrants and who sought us out in the far west settled as our neighbors. I and the first Numedalians chose this tract as our home and our choice was made immediately after our arrival. The same autumn, 1839, a company from Voss in Norway came to the settlement. These Vossings went farther south and as "birds of a feather flock together" so their friends from Voss gradually settled with them. Hence the Jefferson Prairie settlement, as to population, may be divided into two districts, of which the northern consists chiefly of Numedalians while the Vossings predominate in the southern part.

In searching for the Nattestad book I learned that Ole Nattestad had preserved a manuscript copy of it and that sometime in the eighties he had handed this to Prof. Peter Hendrickson, then editor-in-chief of *Skandinaven* in Chicago, with the view of having the manuscript revised and reprinted; but before Professor Hendrickson found time to do this work, his home in Evanston, Illinois, was burned to the ground and in this fire the Nattestad manuscript was lost. Not long since, however, it was shown that the Nattestad book was not a myth. Mr. H. L. Skavlem of Janesville, Wisconsin, is a most patient and thorough student of Norwegian pioneer life in America, and especially of everything pertaining to the people who have emigrated from Numedal. In 1915 he published an account of the "Skavlem and Odegaarden Families in this Country" which is a masterpiece of genealogical records and pioneer history. Mr. Skavlem, beside being an authority on Indian relics and on Wisconsin bird life, has done much to preserve the history of the Norwegians in America. It was he who secured a printed copy of the Nattestad book for preservation in the library of the



TITLE PAGE OF OLE NATTESTAD'S "JOURNEY TO NORTH AMERICA"

Photographed from the copy in the Wisconsin Historical Library

State Historical Society, so far as known the only copy in existence.

Of this copy, which is now being printed in an English translation, Mr. Skavlem gives the following account:

In the summer of the year 1900 James and Henry Natesta, the sons of Ole K. Nattestad, the author of the pamphlet, took a short trip to Norway to visit the home of their forefathers, located in Vegli, Numedal. They made diligent inquiries for a pamphlet said to have been published from a manuscript sent to Norway in 1838 by their father. An old gentleman living close by the old homestead told them he had a copy, which they secured and brought back with them to this country. This copy has been in the possession of the Natesta brothers until last January (1916) when it was turned over to me and I handed it over to the State Historical Society.

In regard to the book, or pamphlet, it is to be stated that while Ole Nattestad had learned to write, he was entirely ignorant of Norwegian grammar. Both his orthography and his syntax are very faulty. There are many subordinate clauses with the principal clause left out. The surprising thing is that the printers in Drammen did not make the necessary corrections. I was requested to follow the original as closely as possible, so as to convey to the reader of the translation as complete a presentation of the original as possible. The mistakes in orthography could only be reproduced in the translation where they concerned proper names. The faults in syntax I have generally reproduced. The reader will have to be the judge of how well I have succeeded. The book is of more than ordinary interest from the fact that it contains a description of an emigrant's journey from Norway to Chicago in 1837, the only description we have of that kind, and also from the fact that it is written by the first immigrant from Norway who set foot on Wisconsin soil.

DESCRIPTION OF A JOURNEY TO NORTH AMERICA

BY OLE KNUDSEN NATTESTAD

In the year 1837, the 8th of April, we started from our homestead, the farm Nattestad, in Weglie-Parish, Rolloug Parson's District, in Nummedal in Norway, for the purpose

of trying our fortune in another part of the world, namely in the free states in North America. We journeyed with an agreeable weather till in the evening of the 11th of the same month. That day we came to the farm Flotyl, at the foot of Storfjeldet (Big Mountain). In the morning the weather was tolerably clear. We began to climb the mountain. When we had gone some distance there began a strong storm with snow and wind and it became so dark that we could not see the least from us. As luck would have it, we found a path which had been used with marsh shoes on the horses' feet over the mountain, and this path we stuck to for the most part, so that we, thanks be to God, made our way safely. We rested a while at Jordbraek, then we went to Roarquam, where we expected to stop over night. As soon as we entered the house there came a man with a boat whose home was $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles [the Norwegian mile is about seven English miles] farther out on a farm by name Quildal. We were allowed to follow him home without pay. There we stayed one day because Ansteen became so weak in his eyes that he could not see to walk, but after we left this place we, for the most part got transportation to Stavanger. There we got trace of a man by name Elias Tastad, with whom all who wanted to go to America inscribed their names. To the above named E. Tastad we arrived the 17th of April. The man named said that "they who desire to sail to America from Stavanger will not get a ship before after St. Johnstide, and still it was not certain what time it would be. But go to Tenager which lies one mile west from here. There lie herring boats which go to Gothenborg and see that you get passage with one of them, —that is the best." As we were informed we went to the place mentioned and at once met a man from Kobbervigen, by name Engebret Rise, from whom we got terms and whom we were to go with. It was said that the above named person, E. Tastad, was a Quaker, and he was a particularly kind-hearted man and he gave us advice in many things. The 18th of the same month we went on board and sailed to the harbor Refkjord; there we lay for 8 days, weather-bound. It is 8 miles north of Lindesnaes. From there we sailed the 28th of the same month. When we came some distance out they had neglected to take water on board. They, therefore, sailed in to Kirkehavn to get water. In the evening when we came out

upon the sea again it was perfectly calm and the fog lay so thick that we could not see a single thing. The calm continued until in the afternoon, then we got a little breeze which increased and came from the southeast until it grew into a perfect storm so the waves washed entirely over the ship. That night the storm drove us back to Kirkehavn again. There we lay till the 3rd of May, then we sailed from there with a pleasant wind and clear weather. That day all ships that were there left the harbor, that before had to lie still. Then there were swarms of ships as far as we could see out upon the ocean. Oh, how delightful it was to look into this beautiful weather. The same day we called in Mandal, 3 miles southeast from Lindesnaes; after a few hours we sailed out from there with the same wind and the next morning we got sight of land at Skagen in Jylland (Scaw in Jutland) which is 30 miles from Mandal. The 5th of May we came to Gothenborg. From New Elfsborg's Fort $\frac{1}{2}$ mile outside of the city came first an officer on board who countersigned our passports and when we came to the custom house wharf the captain went ashore to exhibit our passports there. Afterwards there came officials on board who sealed the cargo of the ship and who also talked with us about our proposed long journey. The next day the captain went about in the city with us and went to the office of Consul Vestberg, who procured passage for passengers and who has information as to whither all ships sail from there. Now, there lay a large ship ready to sail which was loaded with iron which should go to America, and one by name Vigen was the owner of it and one by name Captain Ronneberg was to take it across. Vestberg went at the same time with us to Vigen and talked with him for us. He demanded 200 dollars Rigsgjelds [Swedish money]. That made about 54 speciedaler [Norwegian money]. Now, we were in distress because it was so awfully dear, but our former carrier, named Engebret Rise, persuaded us that we should not refuse it. "Consider," said he, "that you might lie here a whole month and still perhaps have to pay almost the same."—We went to Vestberg again and asked if he could not do it cheaper. "I will go with you up there," said he, "so you get to talk with him." He went up and said that we asked if he could do it cheaper. He stood a little while. "For 50 speciedaler I will do it and that is the very cheapest.

Then you will get on board what you need for sustenance." We accepted this and Engebret Rise said that we should accept. Now, we had gotten transportation. We then went on board after our baggage and E. Rise accompanied us ashore again to a shoemaker of whom we bought a pair of boots and shoes for each of us, and to one by name Fru Bokkom who had all kinds of clothes for sale. There we bought clothes. She asked if we had gotten lodgings. We answered, "No." "From me you can get a room alone without pay when you provide yourselves with food and wood and fuel you shall have what you want to cook it with," said she. We accepted this offer with gratitude and there were very comfortable. On Sunday we went into town and into the Cathedral and heard sermons or mass and there were to be seen many strange things besides the other things which we saw in the city.—On Monday we went on the market to buy us something of this and that. There stood one and beckoned to us. He asked if we were from Norway. "Perhaps you are going over to America," said he, (and asked) whether we had gotten transportation. We said, "Yes! We have gotten and we are to go with the ship belonging to Vigen"; "how much are you then to pay?" When he got to know this he became violently angry and denounced us as big fools who had paid so much. Had we come to him he would have saved us 20 speciedaler for each of us—this was a Jew who stood and changed money and an awfully ugly person to look at with black hair and beard and indescribably thick and fat. Then he asked us if we had more money to change than what we paid in transportation. Then we must come to him. "You cannot get your money changed anywhere else than with me," said he, and told us how high the rate was; we would come to him the next day, we said. He said we should go to Vigen and offer him 20 spd each if we could get our money back; "but you will still not get it back for he well knows what he has done."

We went to Vigen and said that we might have gotten transportation almost 20 spd cheaper if we had waited a little while. "Yes!" said he, "if it is so that you regret what you have done you shall get your money back again, that is the kind of man I am and will not cheat you if you would rather have the money back again"; and then we thought the matter

over and let it be just as it had been done. We noticed something, that the Jew wanted to talk to his own advantage. Tuesday morning we were to come to Vestberg to get some money changed. We came at the time appointed, he counted the money and kept it. When he had done this he said we should come back in the afternoon, he did not yet have the kind of money, he first wanted to go out; we were very much astonished at this, I went in again and told what I thought of this, that we had delivered the money and gotten nothing in return. "You must not believe that we are that kind of people," and then he went away again—we went on the market and there we discovered Vestberg talking with the Jew. We stood looking at this and wondering if it was about our money they were talking, which it also was. When Vestberg went the Jew discovered us and came to us but it was the brother of the one heretofore named. He then told us that Vestberg asked him after the rate of exchange. "Vestberg would get you a note from Vigen that you are to get your money in America, but this you must not do. Go with me and you shall get your money changed." We answered that we did not have the money in our pockets, but we could come back in a little while. At the time appointed we came into Vestberg again and then the Jew stood inside and argued with the clerk about the changing of our money and that amused us. Then we plainly heard who was our friend, the Jew or Vestberg. The Jew wanted us to exchange our money and Vestberg did not want to give as high a rate as demanded; he said, "if it is no more than a skilling [a penny] they are to have it and now they will make $10\frac{1}{2}$ skillings on every spd when they get their money in America, for on the ocean you need no money," said Vestberg.

The Jew in his way with a well-nigh matchless eloquence and who thereon was thundering mad at Vestberg because he did not get his way, but it was of no help to him when we learned of the Jew's speculation for which he fought with us. When the Jew did not succeed he had to go but he stood in the door and scolded them as he also had done before. We got a note each which was printed in the English language which stated how much money we had and how high the exchange rate was and how many piasters we were to have in return; this note was from Vigen, the owner of the ship to

the Swedish Consul in America, from whom we were to get the money and we got one (note) which was written and which we were to retain when we delivered the others.

Wednesday morning we went aboard and after that we lived there; Thursday, the 11th we sailed out of the harbor; then there was on board the owner of the ship together with many distinguished men who accompanied it a short distance; when these had gone into the boat and gotten a little distance from the ship there were fired 4 salvos with the big cannons. Afterwards there was shouting of hurrahs, first by those in the boats, afterwards by the ship's crew. Off New Elfsborg's Fort, a half mile from the city 4 salvos were also fired and 2 in response by the fort; then we took our leave from the city.

A little story about the ship by name *Hilda*, on which we were passengers, the most beautiful ship in all Gothenborg, and almost in all Sweden, it was said; it had made a single journey to America before, otherwise it was new and with copper bottom and it was upon the whole as if it were cast (in a mold), it was furnished with 2 decks, a lower deck 3 ells high to the ceiling which (the deck) was painted blue on the sides and up under the upper deck yellow and likewise above the deck and quarter deck $2\frac{1}{2}$ ells high and very tight and strongly made and blue painted; the upper part was upon the whole constructed like a door of glass and painted with yellow brass and the panels blue. Astern stood a cabin on the deck which was polished both externally and internally and also on the lower deck and in both of them as beautiful furniture as can be made. In the front was placed works of sculpture all gilt, likewise in the stern and a maiden carved in wood in the most beautiful draperies and fineries that could be found and as if she were a living being. From Elfsborg, as heretofore mentioned, we sailed with a fair wind to the day of Pentecost, then it became calm and we had reached the Faröe Islands, which lie north of Scotland. The second day of Pentecost there came one from Jutland and wanted to go to the Faröes with 12 men and these came on board and got some water; then we first heard English talked. From there we sailed mostly with good wind but awhile before we came to the New Foundland banks; we saw 5 icebergs (it

was pieces or lumps which drift south from the polar ocean), the one was like a large building to look at. Sunday morning, the 4th of June, came we to the banks, this morning there were caught 62 pounds and 10 mkr of codfish. The above named banks are a shallow 30 fathoms deep and a few hundred miles in circumference, which lie about 300 miles from America. There always lie ships which only fish. From there we sailed with a favorable wind; the 11th of June in the morning, 9 o'clock, we first saw land in America and were therefore not more than 32 days from leaving until we came to land. In the evening there came a pilot on board and at 12 o'clock we came into the city Nyport, where we lay at anchor a little while. In the morning when I arose and came upon the deck I saw something new; for the city and also the country around about was delightful for me to see. At 12 o'clock we sailed from there up to Falreva [Fall River] which lies 18 miles northeast from here. Here the ship stopped and the cargo was here sold. On the journey from Nyport to there was many agreeable things to see; the land on both sides was so splendid and particularly the beautiful trees which there here grows a multitude of. As soon as we came to the above named Falreva there came a Norwegian watchmaker apprentice on board who had gotten knowledge of the fact that a Swedish boat had entered and he was from Christiania; it was agreeable to get to talk with our fellow countryman. He informed us concerning many things which were useful to us.—Here in the city we have now gone about and looked at many beautiful curiosities; especially in machine shops and factories of which there here are a great number; among other things we first inspected an iron factory, very strange. What here was used as material was nothing but burnt and rusty iron such as machine scraps, boilers, stove pipes, and other scraps. This was first cut up by a large iron knife which cut it into threads even if it was 2 inches thick. Afterwards it was smelted and cut into strings. These strings were heated one time and with this it went through some rollers 10 to 11 times and became hoop-iron between 1 and 2 inches wide and 15 to 16 ells long and over. These stringers were delivered to another building in which there were 50 work benches. There was made nails of these stringers. The nail was cut from the end of the

stringer and this went so fast almost as corn running from a mill and was done by one man. These machines were very strange and many things which I here on account of time and space cannot describe.—The first mate on board told us that he had never seen the equal although he had been in many lands in Europe and in many cities in America.

He said we ought to go there and see, it would be interesting for us; we did not dare to go because we did not know the language and none of the ship's crew had time to go with us; but the first mate said we might go. "I think you will be allowed to anyway," and he told us what we should say when we came there.—We went there and asked in English if we could look over the factory; it was permitted. One went with us from one room to another; it lasted fully 2 hours and we did not see anything but new things wherever we came so that for want of space am not able to describe how it was. From the weaving factory the goods came there and the first work there was to bleach it and that went fast, afterwards it was made ready with flowers and colors as it was to be. Yes, here were some ship-loads of cotton cloths with many other things which were here which I cannot describe.—The 17th of May we went from Falreva on a steamboat to Provedens, which is 30 miles. The captain went with us to Provedens and got transportation to New York for us. The steamboat we went from Provedens to New York on was very large. It was certainly 100 ells long, with 2 engines and so many strange appliances which I had never been able to imagine before. There were 10 to 12 black negroes which prepared the food and some carried it to and from the tables. Ah! here was much to see for us. The room which we were best able to examine was certainly of 30 ells length and two dining tables which were loaded with dishes and drinking cups as close together as possible and all of porcelain stoneware and the glasses looked like crystal; but all who ate there I have not the number of; on both sides in this room was bed after bed [sofas]; curtains and sheets which we saw there were of the choicest calico and some looked like silk. The carpets looked like the finest camel's hair cloth and many other things which I cannot here describe.—This journey from Provedens to New York was 230 miles and we were 12 hours on the way;

now we were among foreign nations and did not understand their language the least. When we came to New York it became worse as we had to go ashore; there came many who talked to us but we didn't understand them and no more they us; but I suppose they asked us where we were going; at last there came one on board who talked to us; when he heard that we did not understand he said that we should go with him. I went with him, he went into a little store; there was a French man who was to talk to me and asked if I was from France; I said I was Norwegian. He went away from me. Then there came one that so far as I could understand was from the region near France. He asked me where I was from, I answered from Norwegian, this he understood and said, "that is far away"; then I was to stop there while one went out on the street; he soon came back again and had with him a person who could talk a little Norwegian and would come with me on board; when we got on the way he told me that he was Swedish and Norwegian Consul. From the boat we took our baggage and went with this man to a basement which was a boarding house and there this consul had his home and there we should stay and he should advise us and get transportation to Rochester. When we came into the city we saw a Norwegian flag on a ship and some Swedish (flags); now my comrades went to see if they could find these ships; they met first a Swede and afterwards a Norwegian who was from Arendal and had come from England with 140 passengers; when they had talked with these they came to me again who was sitting inside and keeping watch over the baggage, now went I and my brother out for I had letters from our first mate which were addressed to a Swedish ship which lay in the harbor there and was the same one which they had been aboard and so I got the letters properly presented. When we came to the Norwegian ship again there came on board a shoemaker from Bergen who had come to America a year before and had come with one from Christiansand by name Jansen who was married and who was a merchant; when we came to talk with them the merchant said we should get lodgings at his home. We first went with him to his house. He immediately went to the place where

we had our baggage; when we got there the house was so full of people that we hardly could get in.

Jansen who was with us asked the host whether our baggage might remain there until in the morning for it was so near the river and this was permitted. In the morning, namely Monday, Jansen went with us to secure transportation to Rochester. A lieutenant from Gothenborg told me that the year before he had talked with many Norwegians nor did Jansen know where the Norwegians had located up through the country, but he knew they had gone that way. Now we went to the office and Jansen secured transportation for us to the above Rochester, he then went with us to the house where the baggage was and got it brought to the office about 5 o'clock in the afternoon, when the steamer was to leave; afterwards he went with us to some money changers to get our money changed into silver for the Swedish Consul from whom we were to have our money in Falreva as above stated, he cheated us a little; we should have had silver and got nothing else than paper money and these we had to have changed again for they would not be accepted up in the country. I will state that there are many difficulties with money here; there is an innumerable number of banks and the money isn't passed more than in the bank's district; some of these (banks) are weak so that it is difficult to receive money with which one is not acquainted; all paper passes for the same as silver but people very much prefer silver. Jansen and the other Norwegians we met frightened us very much and said we must not go farther before we changed our money to silver and so said Jansen went with us to get our money changed. We came in to one and Jansen asked him how much he took in percentage. He wanted 18 per cent and Jansen said we should take silver. He changed 40 spd in silver and the rest in paper which I had to give 2 per cent for and when we considered the matter all this was to no use for there would be banks and exchange houses wherever we happened to stop; but this I could not think of until it was too late but Ansteen didn't change his money but it was Jansen's fault that I gave this money in exchange. We went to another broker and asked him how much he wanted in exchange. He said 12 per cent; then I found out how I had

exchanged my money, and for paper money he didn't take any per cent. Ansteen exchanged his money for paper but didn't take any silver.

Now I must write something about New York City, but which is almost indescribable. Jansen went with us in many streets to show us some of the splendid things in the city. All the streets in which we walked were nothing but stores right through the buildings, yes, so large that we could not see the end of them and was packed as closely as possible with all kinds of goods. Yes, likewise on the streets and buildings were all kinds of clothing, besides drawings and pictures of men, horses, and all kinds of animals in their full shape so we did not know but that they were alive; and the buildings were 5 and 6 stories high. But navigation was still more to be looked at with all the ships that lay here which I guarantee were in the thousands and an immense number so large that the largest I have seen in Norway were almost like yachts in comparison with these and they looked as if they were cast in a mold. Likewise were steamboats of which there surely were hundreds here and many which went only across the river with passengers so that one could go to the wharf whenever he pleased and there stood passage ready. In the city was also a street which stood full the whole day with horses and wagons only to be hired by anybody that wanted them. I will also tell how it was with passage on the steamboat. Here there is no question about getting passage but who ever wants to can get his baggage and go on board and not speak to anybody. This one can do no matter what country he is from; for there is never a question about passports and the pay is collected on board and tickets given until one goes ashore which are then to be returned. Monday, the 19th of June, 5 o'clock in the afternoon, we went on board the steamboat in New York for Albany which is 161 miles and arrived there in the morning; there we did not understand a single person nor did we meet anybody that we could talk with. When we were to go ashore there we did not know where we were to go; but we had a ticket from the office in New York that we were to have free passage to Rochester, this we exhibited and were instructed accordingly. There came a man with horse and cart on which we were to place our baggage; he drove us to

an office and said we should stop until the office was opened and then we should show our tickets, that we understood. Soon the office was open and we went in with our tickets which they took and kept and wrote one for us instead. I asked the office man what time the boat would go again; but although each one of us spoke his own tongue, I could understand that it was not to go before in the afternoon. Now we walked about in the city to see the sights and there we saw many strange things; among other things we saw a great tower which looked as if it were made of pure gold and we saw the glitter of this tower out on the river before we came to the city. We went to this tower to look at it; when we came near to it we could see that it was plated with brass but this must have been gilt otherwise it would fade. A somewhat smaller tower glittered like silver plated with tin; likewise I have in America in several cities seen many houses with roofs of tin. Here we also were permitted to examine the house where the steam cars are kept. From there we saw that they drove the cars with horses and 2 cars for each horse until they came some distance from the city where the engine itself received them and which hauled 20 cars at a time, even if all were filled with freight. This railroad went over the Philadelphia but the length of it I do not know.— Now I am going to report something that I have neglected, namely: when we had come on board the steamboat in Providence, and just as we left the shore we saw an engine go from the carhouse and draw 10 cars with it and all were filled with people; this we stood on the deck and saw; it went to the city of Boston.

In the afternoon we went on board on the canal boat here in Albany. These boats are all the same size. They are about 30 ells long and 5 ells wide with room for freight in the center and a cabin in each end with costly curtains in the windows and painted floor with carpets on; the other furniture in the rooms were for the most part polished.

At the first start of the canal boat they pushed this forward with poles a little ways up the locks, that is, a dam which the boat went up; above the lock there was built a large dam in which the boat was turned around and under a house. Now one of the locks was closed and the water tapped off

so that the boat stood dry on some beams; there was an arrangement whereby the boat was weighed with the cargo in, excepting the people that went ashore; when this was done the lock was opened and the boat floated and went back. From there it was taken with 2 horses and hauled all the way to Buffalo. With wonderment we looked at the works on this canal especially the locks which were 85 in number and between 5 and 6 ells high and all of cut marble, and a large part of the finest white marble. Along the canal there is an immense number of cities which are lately founded; but I do not know the name of them because I did not understand English. With wonderment we saw near a little town a large steep hill which was covered with railroads for steam cars. Yes, there went one railroad which could not escape this hill and there for the first time we saw many cars hooked together which came down the hill without both horses and engines, that we could see; when they came down they were taken with horses; likewise when the horses came to the hill from below with the car many were hooked together and went up the hill of their own accord.

Erik Hougén, from Thiin, stated that he took a ride on a steam car from Albany, a distance upward which hauled 18 cars full of people; but when they came to such a hill he said, the engine let go of them and the other cars went down the hill by themselves; in the middle of the hill they met a car with an awfully large load of stones which went up on the other track. I did not see any engine that pulled but by the side of the load was a big iron beam which went on cushions. This was probably the machine. Perhaps this was in the same hill on which we saw the cars go.

In Rochester we had heard it said that there were Norwegians there; thither we came one morning early and went ashore and looked about in the city. Ansteen now met a man that had arrived a year before; this man was going to work so he did not get to talk much with him; he directed us to where we might meet one who had been there a few years but him we did not meet. While we went there and waited we met a man by a bridge who was from Faaloino in Stavanger County and had come over the year before. He told us where the Norwegians had located in the west, namely,

in the State of Illinois, which was over 1000 miles from Buffalo. He told us that the Norwegians who had come to Illinois had written to them how it was there, that a plain laborer could get from 1 to 1½ dollars per day and afterwards about the tradesmen, how much they could get according to their kind; he said, "if you have so much money that you can get there, you should not stop before you get there; if I had so much money I would go tomorrow," said he. He went with us into a merchant he was acquainted with and asked if our money was good enough; but he said that it did not pass in Illinois and if they desired would exchange it without any per cent. That was very good for there we got Illinois money; yes, we got some silver too in place of paper.—The above mentioned man told us that the canal was damaged and that we must not make contract with the captain farther than there for the time being. Now, we parted with pleasure from this man and betook us on the journey to Buffalo, which is 100 miles from Rochester.

When we came to the break in the canal referred to above we got on to another boat; a lot of people came on board which were from Bavaria in Germany, and some French; there was certainly 100 of them and all were peasants; and all their male persons had blue linen shirts outside of their clothes with large pockets on them which hung outside and many wore caps which fitted close to the head.—These people all had to be in the freight room; but we were allowed to be in the front room with some Scotchmen with whom we were in company from Albany; these were mostly young people of both sexes but very good-natured and jolly with singing and other entertainment; we got so acquainted with these as if we were the best friends at home, but we did not understand each others' talk. When we came to Buffalo, which is the end of the canal, we had to go from there on steamboat to Detroit; from Buffalo the Scotchmen secured passage for us just as for themselves but some of them parted with us there.—In Buffalo we first saw Indians; that is, the original Americans who live about like the Lapps in Norway and subsist on hunting and without houses; but have tents which they move from one place to another. Those we saw there we could notice were women; we came first into a merchant

where one stood and talked with him; when she went out we asked him what kind of a person that was; he answered it was an Indian; but we did not yet understand what that meant.—Their clothes consist of trousers on each hip which extend from the upper part of the hip with a belt around the waist and a strap from the trouser hips up to it besides a shirt above which extends down to the hip, that is the underwear; outside they have a sort of blanket which consists of white, blue, and colored stripes which they hang over the head and which reaches down on the legs and this they hold around themselves with their hands; on their feet they have shoes of skin which are fitted tight to the feet and no socks but the women have the most beautiful etchings outside of their trousers and some of them wear much of gold and silver ornaments.

Now we went on the steamboat in company with these Scotchmen in Buffalo which went to Detroit over the Erie Lake which is a fresh water and which is so large that we could not see land only on one side; but when we came to Detroit we did not know where to go; but 2 carpenters of these Scotchmen said that they were going to Schicago, the same place as we were going to. We went with them to the boarding house; I at once went out and down on the wharf to look around; on the street I met one of the Norwegians who had gone out from Bergen the 7th of April this year. When I came to talk with him he related that there were about 80 persons in the company who were bound for Schicago and they had been staying here for 5 days and had not got passage but after 2 days they were to get passage. Now we took leave of these Scotchmen and went to our fellow countrymen with whom we have kept company from that time on. In Detroit we had to pay 10 dollars apiece to Schicago, which is 700 miles, which also was fresh water. On this steamboat were such a great number of passengers that we could hardly sit down. The sailors and others were so thievish that we could scarcely keep our baggage; yes, a part of it they took from us.

They went into a city to take wood (fuel), the name of it I do not remember but there was a fort. Here we got to see plenty of Indians; when we got ashore there was on

the pier a whole lot of Indians. Among them was one who was said to be captain who was very grand in clothes and a big silver ring in the nose, which was fastened to the middle wing of the nose. In the ears there was a sheaf of silver blocks and they had silk bands in the ears in which these ornaments were hung; yes, many more had such things. One had 3 tassels in the ear and 30 of the above blocks in each tassel but there was only one with a ring in the nose. At the knees they had wound pretty bands that were embroidered with small beads and were very pretty and a whole tassel that hung down to the foot which was embroidered with beads; that is the costume of the menfolks. Some of the women had gold rings on the fingers almost as many as they had room for. On one we counted them and she had 44 gold rings on her hands. Another had covered the breasts and over the shoulder with smooth silver brooches as closely as possible. Their complexion is for the most part soot-brown or brown-black with broad faces, without beard and long black hair. Some of them had painted themselves with red, blue, and black stripes across the faces, which was to mean that they would be manly in strife if anybody attacked them. These people are very curious to look at, still they look fierce; but they are said to be very good-natured and a separate language they have. After we entered the city called Gronbay (Green Bay), there were also some Indians. There lay a garrison of warriors, which they said was to be for the Indians if they should break in and make an attack. In this garrison they wanted more men which they enlisted for 3 years and would give 50 dollars in enlistment money and then 6 dollars a month and free board and clothing and not much drill but good learning do they get there. On a Sunday we came to Schicago; when we came ashore there came Norwegians to talk with us but the most of them talked unfavorably of the condition there. Some of the Norwegians, especially the women, let themselves be frightened; but when we had made some investigation it was not true. Many got into great distress when they heard that there was not free land to be had. Yes, a Norwegian from Stavanger County had lately been up in the country but could not hear of any, he said and insisted that it was much worse than in Norway, but he was a big talker and probably also a big liar.

When we had remained here in the city a couple of days we learned that 50 miles south from here there was free land. Now, it was resolved that some men should go there and examine and the others should remain in the city and that everyone that wanted land should help pay for this journey, whereupon one was hired to take them with team. Those that were chosen to go was Candidate Rynning, from Sneasaasen, near Tronhjem, 2 men from Bergen's Stift and I. When we came there we found that the land was poor but it was resolved that we should remain there. Now, 2 men were to stay to build a shanty to live in when the people got there and the lot fell to me and one from Etne Sogn.—When the people got there we got much abuse because the land was not good but when we had hunted a few days all were satisfied except those who never can be satisfied. The most of us located near a creek which is called Baeverkrek (Beaver Creek) and there we took a piece of land each and are now very well contented therewith if we are able to keep it and pay for it. Here the land is so free that whatever nation that comes can locate without asking anybody's leave until the land becomes sold and that is determined by the government; but here there is much trading among people with free land. Here we have now been 2 months and built a fine house with rooms in and now we are going away to learn the language and to get some work whereby we can earn money. Halsteen Flose separated from us in Schicago and went in company with several westward in Illinois to get work; we soon got the report from them that they all got work and earned $1\frac{1}{2}$ dollars a day besides free keep.—On our journey we have been in intercourse with people almost from all European lands, yes, original Americans and negroes. I have heard that these people have many different religious sects but one cannot see any great difference in their manner of living for they are polite and friendly toward each other. But among the people which I have seen that from the first I saw them seemed to be so horrible; they are the black negroes with wool-curly hair and I had no desire to look at them. But when I now for some time had been in intercourse with them I thought they were the most lovable and jolly people I ever have seen; wherever I see them they are all equally jolly,

good-natured and polite, so that I do not think anybody equal to them in manners. The Indians on the other hand are the most horrible people I have seen.

Among other stories I will also report that first mate Malgren from Gothenborg told me of some curious things which he had seen in Philadelphia. There was namely a fountain which was built and taken out 6 English miles above the city and there it was pumped 600 feet high from the river which was done with an engine so light that one man could operate it up to 2 large dams which contained an immense quantity of water. From there it went in iron pipes down to the city where it was distributed in all streets so that they had spring water nearly in every house; yes, it went up in the 4th and 5th stories in the houses. At all corners and single streets there were large fountains and hydrants where they put on the water hose when fire breaks out in the city. There are certainly 60 of that kind of hose which were of bright brass as well polished that one could hardly look at them on account of the brilliancy. He said they were indescribably good and that they never could burn more than one house, no matter how fierce the fire had broke out for these hose struck nearly through the houses, such force had they.

The above mentioned canal, namely from Albany to Buffalo, I have now gotten knowledge of that it was first planned and begun to be worked on in the year 1817 and in 1827 it was ready to be traveled on in a distance of 60 Norwegian miles and cost 9 millions.

In the year 1836 work was begun on a canal which is to go from Schicago to the Mississippi River and which will be 150 miles, that is 26 Norwegian miles. When this is finished one will be able to go by water from New York to New Orleans which is 3500 English miles, whereby one passes, rivers, canals, and fresh water. Likewise there are built tracks for steam cars from Philadelphia nearly to Schicago. Next summer there is to be built a railroad which is to go from the one that comes from Philadelphia to Vaabais [Wabash], a river which empties into the Mississippi and of this railway it is said that it shall go across the Mississippi and clear across America even to the Pacific Ocean. Here we may see there are good institutions and as land becomes settled it becomes

supplied with canals and railroads everywhere, so that like a bird one can travel both by land and by water.

In regard to religious sects there are great diversity and I have as yet but little understanding of their teachings; but so far as I understand they nearly all believe in one single, true God, and it looks as if the government took much interest in a good religion. I have examined many school books and so far as I understand, the principles are the same as in Norway. There have been inserted in the newspapers many examples as warnings for the people that they ought to live righteously and pleasing to God. Yes, also in the almanac these things are inserted, yes, and everywhere are many warnings in regard to drunkenness and it is the greatest foolishness that a man does to drink liquor, which it certainly also is. In Norway people are urged and forced to drink liquor but so it is not here, for here the people are induced by warnings to moderation; and when a man accepts these warnings and reports it to his friends who also will be the same, namely never either drink or treat liquor, and thereby can many and large societies be freed from this vice.

A short story of the formation of the country.

When one goes from New York up through the country, it is a perfectly dry, stony field, but quite well wooded and the soil becomes better and better and everywhere fruitful. In the State of New York it is quite mountainous in some places but in the State of Michigan it is flat and level, besides wooded everywhere until one reaches the State of Illinois. Here the land looks like the ocean after a storm when the huge billows are rolling. Here there is timber enough some places, as along rivers and other places; other places timber stands in thick groves where people have settled. For the rest there are only rolling plains which are called prairies and these are everywhere overgrown with grass and are for the most part as the best cultivated farms in Norway. These prairies one can plow and seed with what you please which there grows abundantly without being fertilized. Here the best timber land has been taken, but it pays well to till the soil here, that I can see. The man that I now have been with and worked for, has 160 acres land fenced in and from this piece certainly has a crop for over 3000 dollars, although certainly 40 acres are not seeded; they have little

work with planting. 160 acres costs 200 dollars to buy but it costs more to get it fenced in. The size of one acre is 208 feet on each side.

Mr. Bekvald, the man I have been with this winter, told me that if one goes from east to west one always has the best land before him. Hitherto the people have moved east, namely to here; but now they are moving from here more and more to the west where it is also said to be better, although here it looks like being the best land that anyone can desire; but I also have in my mind to go more to the west to look for land.

I will also relate that I have been with a man and worked this winter from the 14th of October to the present day and I have earned 50 dollars in a period of 4 months, in spite of the fact that I did not know the language the least when I came there. Some said to me that I did work for 20 dollars a month. I have done heavy work and the same man has offered me 190 dollars for a year and the best keep that any official can get in Norway. It is my opinion that everyone who has his youth and is unmarried certainly can make up his mind in regard to the journey; but one must consider that he is leaving his home and his relatives and friends. I have heard many, especially among the women, say that if they have ever so good days, they are homesick for Norway. Everyone that starts on the journey must consider that one must first taste sour before he can drink sweet. It is difficult here when one does not understand the language and it is worse when he is unable to work.

I will also report how big day's wages the workingman gets here. A laborer can get from 12 to 16 dollars a month in the winter and in the summer nearly the double. The price is some places more and some places less. A girl can get from 1 to 2 dollars a week as soon as they have some knowledge of the language.

Baeverkrek in Illinois, the 21st of February, 1838.

Ole Knudsen Nattestad.

Postscript: More have I not time to write this time; but this description of travel I send home to you, my relatives and friends! if you have desire to read herein about what I on my long journey have experienced and seen since I was at home with you.